

The Entertainment Industries Violation Of The Fourth Wall



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Manipulation of the human mind through the use of mass media is a highly complex and controversial topic. Hundreds of books and entire university seminars have been devoted to proving and debunking the power of media to control mas

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Nearly all of our cultural idioms (nothing burger), political sloganeering (MAGA) and social discourse (hawk tuah) come to us through a screen. We receive them from advertising, entertainment, social media, and public affairs programming. To say the media have no effect on individual or group thinking and behavior is to deny plainly obvious fact.

With 50 years of work in theatre, film and television, I can attest that the mind control is very real, very powerful and thoroughly weaponized.

A visit to any ancient Greek amphitheatre will prove that the technology and ability to manipulate audiences at a visceral level is nothing new. The Greeks used the theatre to demonstrate virtue and morality, with the expectation that the audience would emulate the gods in their daily lives. In fact, we might consider early Greek theatre as the original virtue signalling.

The proscenium arch was invented in the early 17th century in Italy. It is generally credited to Italian architect and designer **Giovan Battista Aleotti**. The earliest recorded use of a true proscenium arch is at the Teatro Farnese in Parma, Italy. The power of this seemingly simple architectural feature is attested to by the fact that nearly every film and video screen is a horizontal rectangle, and the fact that vertically formatted videos never “feel” right.

The invention of the proscenium created a separation between the acting area and the auditorium, with the psychological effect of making the audience feel unthreatened by the scene unfolding before them. Feeling safe from the activity in the acting area, audiences let their psychological defenses down and become passive observers of the world created within the frame.

In the “safe zone” of the auditorium, the audience is shown characters acting and reacting to various situations, with the attendant consequences. When characters behave “correctly,” they are rewarded with accolades and adulation, and when they behave “badly,” they are punished with tragic outcomes and scorn. In this way, audiences are taught what is permissible behavior, and are shown graphic depictions of what happens when they don’t follow the social norms.

Being psychologically removed from the scene, the audience relaxes and focuses on “the message,” rather than constantly assessing threats and anticipating responses. Instead, they internalize the scene and file it away for future reference. They empathize with the main characters and vicariously “feel” the rewards and punishments meted out in the course of the scene.

Go watch American films from the late 30s and early 40s, just before and during the country’s entry into World War 2. Foreign characters are portrayed as devious and conniving, usually with some kind of physical defect, while Americans are portrayed as somewhat naive and reluctant to get involved, but virtuous and resourceful. The Americans have all the solutions to the convoluted mess the foreigners have created, and in the end the Americans are rewarded with wealth and privilege, or whatever the MacGuffin is.

Films like these created a feeling of moral superiority in the minds of the audience, and when the time came to mobilize for a war on another continent that didn’t involve them, something in the backs of their minds told them they were the ones to solve the problem and reap the rewards of doing so.

Modern films and shows have violated a cardinal rule of the proscenium — the fourth wall — which is the imaginary wall of the arch that separates the audience from the scene. With the ham-fisted “inclusion” and “diversity,” the sense of “reality” is lost. Furthermore, when the characters begin lecturing on “good behavior” and “right think,” the fourth wall is pierced and the audience no longer feels safe. The scene has spilled into the auditorium and the audience immediately raises shields. They are no longer safely observing the scene from a distance, but are now pulled into it, with all the attendant psychological threats.

If we look at shows like “Seinfeld” or “Friends,” we see a group of characters who are connected, but not attached. They live glamorous lives full of fun and quirky adventures unburdened by spouses and children, or even many everyday responsibilities. Though none of the characters ever blatantly says the SINK/DINK lifestyle (Single/Dual Income No Kids) is fun and glamorous, the audience understands subconsciously that the drudgery of attachment and responsibility is neither fun nor

glamorous. This is “lifestyle modelling,” and the primary means by which advertising functions.

Lifestyle modelling creates a desire in the minds of the audience to emulate the characters. This phenomenon shows up in catch phrases entering common use as a shared cultural idiom. The clothing, furnishings and brands used within the video or film space become hot items among consumers wanting to display their aspiration to a manufactured lifestyle. A prime example of this is the Soup Nazi featured on “Seinfeld,” a real no-frills slop house that went viral overnight, as audiences sought to replicate the lifestyle/experience of fictional characters.

The lifestyle modelling industry is what Disney has built an empire on, and which film “franchises” have emulated for decades. The media create fantasy worlds that burn themselves on the subconscious minds of the audience, creating a desire to live in a manufactured world with only the trappings of reality.

Contemporary shows are offensive because they accost the audience with “virtuous” behavior, to the point where extreme close-ups, music stabs and dramatic pauses highlight the “virtuous” behavior expected. Instead of sliding into the viewer’s mind unchallenged, he is now overtly aware of the affront and throws up psychological defenses, which we observe as backlash against Woak Entertainment. We are no longer passively observing, but are fully conscious of the fact that we are being manipulated.

To my mind, the profound lack of subtlety and understanding of how media work belies ignorance of the tools available to those creating the current crop of “entertainment”. Either the writers, producers, directors, and actors are dysfunctional psychopaths lacking any amount of empathy and skill, and/or AI is creating almost everything being pushed at us in the media.

Bumbledick “entertainment” is bereft of emotional maturity and technical know-how. It is childish, showing ability to use paint and a brush, but no training in composition, color theory or technique. It has no style or creative spark; no subtle turn of phrase nor cultural depth — AI being incapable of manipulating emotions because it has none.

The result is boorish and uninspired clap-trap, with no sense of artistry or life experience to draw on. It is the bland, uninteresting product of bland and uninteresting minds, who think sprinkling a little salt on pabulum makes it *paella pollo*. They've never experienced a genuine life moment, and so cannot portray one.

I suppose we should be thankful that the Bumbledicks have no skill or artistry. If they were able to insert their propaganda into great works, we may be completely susceptible to their manipulations. As it is, the Bumbledick vandalize great works in the hopes of using ancient magic they no longer possess.

As it is, the Bumbledicks are swinging brutish clubs at our faces and expecting us not to flinch, and they just can't understand when we do. They have no history or culture to draw on, and are thus reduced to slapping their audiences with their messaging. We are generally immune to their pedantic tantrums, because we are fully aware of them and never let our guard down.

As the great raconteur Fred Allen remarked 70 years ago, "Television is a medium, because it is neither rare nor well done."

It seems we have fully realized his insight.

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